

This enables each remote site to customize the PDA 12 by importing and installing data, some of which can be unique to management sessions conducted at each of the remote sites. For example, in the case of a package delivery business like UPS®, Inc., customized information for a particular management session may include driver information, package car information, site information and area information, which can be downloaded from the remote personal computer 14 to the PDA 12. Using the application software, the remote personal computer 14 also provides the functionality to view and print reports related to training and evaluation data that is uploaded from the PDA 12 after each management session.

[0031] The central computer system 16 can be used to coordinate management activities across an entire organization, and includes an On-the-Job training and Supervision (OJS) database 32. The OJS database 32 stores evaluation and training histories that can allow for analysis of employee performance, supervisor performance, and company-wide performance. The central computer system 16 is preferably connected to the remote personal computers 14 via a network 34. The network 34 can be the Internet or other public or private communications network, for example. However, the central computer system 16 can also be connected to communicate with the remote personal computer 14, and in some cases the PDA 12, via other communication ports, wired or wireless, as described above.

[0032] FIG. 2 shows an overview of the information transmitted between the components of the system 10 for coordinating the management activities associated with a plurality of employees according to an embodiment of the present invention. Updates generated at the central computer system 16 can be downloaded with appropriate frequency to remote personal computers 14 located at the remote offices of supervisors and their subordinate employees. The training updates may include new practices to be followed by employees, updated methods on how to perform existing practices, updated formats for recording performance data, and other related information. The updates from the central computer system 16 help to provide a more consistent format for managing employees across different locations, and across different supervisors. The updates also help to provide a more consistent format for recording evaluation and training data during a management session, which allows the recorded information to be readily added to the OJS database 32.

[0033] Another significant advantage of using the PDA 12 is that, at any point during a session, data contained on the PDA can be made immediately available to other entities within an organization. This can be accomplished in a known manner by transmitting such data via one or more transmission channels using, for example, at least one of the PDA's data radios described above. In other words, if a PDA 12 is being used out in the field, and an event is recorded by the PDA that may be of immediate significance to an entity in an entirely different location from where the PDA is being used, then such data (and any other data) can be immediately transmitted either directly or via a network server, from the PDA 12 to that entity by using one or more of the communications means described above. Similarly, data can also be received by the PDA 12 from one or more such locations either directly or via a network server. Thus, the PDA 12 provides the additional benefit of allowing other remotely

located entities to interact with the events of a management session in real time, when necessary.

[0034] It should be understood that the term "management," as used herein, is to be construed broadly. In other words, the present invention is applicable to a wide variety of situations in which a first person is engaged in some form of evaluation and/or training of a second person. Therefore, those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that any number of terms could be used to describe such a situation. For example, in referring to the respective parties involved in an evaluation and/or training session, any of the following terms might be applicable depending on the circumstances: "observer" and "subject," "supervisor" and "subordinate," "supervisor" and "employee," "mentor" and "mentee," "trainer" and "trainee," "teacher" and "student" and other such terms. However, for the sake of convenience in describing the preferred embodiments of the present invention, the terms that will be used most frequently to describe the respective parties are "supervisor" and "subordinate," or "supervisor" and "employee." Thus, the use of these particular terms, or other such terms, and the term "management" should in no way be construed as limiting the scope or applicability of the present invention.

[0035] In addition to providing a more structured approach to training and evaluation, the system 10 is also advantageous for when an organization needs to rapidly deploy one or more new training or evaluation practices. To expedite the implementation of the one or more new practices, corresponding information can be entered into the central computer system 16, transmitted from the central computer system to remote personal computers 14 via the network 34, and downloaded from the remote personal computers to a supervisor's PDA 12 via the wireless communication link 29. With the information downloaded into the supervisor's PDA 12, the supervisor can begin using the PDA to evaluate and/or train a delivery driver on the new practices almost immediately. The manner in which the PDA 12 is used to coordinate these activities is described in detail below.

[0036] More generally, the PDA 12 can be used to facilitate a management session between a supervisor 36 and a subordinate 38. The PDA 12 is particularly advantageous in assisting a supervisor 36 who is required to accompany an individual 38 out in the field to evaluate their performance and administer training. For example, an on-road supervisor 36 at a package delivery company can use the PDA 12 to facilitate an on-route evaluation and training session with a delivery driver 38. When PDAs that are similarly programmed are used by supervisors to evaluate and train employees throughout an organization, the evaluation and training will be more consistent and more efficient. After session-related information is downloaded from the remote personal computer 14 to the PDA 12, the supervisor 36 can begin the management session by logging onto his or her PDA. The PDA 12 is programmed to provide the supervisor 36 with a series of screens displays that are designed to assist the supervisor in evaluation or training of the subordinate 38. The screen displays are also designed to provide a standardized format for capturing a record of activity comprising the relevant events which occur during the management session.

[0037] The PDA 12 is programmed to display a number of screens that correspond to a list of elements which comprise